Activity 2.3



**Why did the Romans settle at Bath?**

Using evidence: facts, sources and inference.

The Roman invasion of AD 43 led to the rapid construction of a road network and forts in the South-West.

The Fosse Way crossed the river at Bath.

The hot springs were not the centre of Roman

attention. The convergence of existing and new routes was, however, strategically important.

The building of a civilian settlement began after the Roman invasion and following relative peace with local Britons.

Archaeological evidence shows that the site of the Roman baths’ main spring was treated as a shrine by the Britons and was dedicated to their goddess Sulis.

The temple to Sulis Minerva was constructed in AD 60–70 adjacent to the baths and the Sacred Spring.

The Romans likened the Briton goddess Sulis to their goddess Minerva.

The name Sulis was used after the Roman invasion, appearing in the town’s name of Aquae Sulis (the waters of Sulis).

Roman prosperity may have been reflected in

the number of villas which surrounded the town.

The bathing complex that developed over 300 years consisted of a series of baths and rooms of different temperatures, designed for communal bathing and the rituals of cleansing.

By digging a drainage channel to the River Avon and surrounding the spring (the Sacred Spring, a source of the hot waters) with a stone structure, the marsh could be drained and built upon.

Bath was of quite modest size. Nonetheless, as well as a focus of pilgrimage it was also a local centre, and a range of buildings has been discovered which reflect town life.

Give three reasons as to why Bath grew in Roman times:

1.

2.

3.

Source of information on the grid squares above: An Historical Map of Bath Medieval, Stuart and Georgian, City, Town and Historical Maps no.17. Historic Towns Trust and History of Bath Research Group.